5: Nicolaisen E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1959
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Tuareg Letters *(Tifinagh)*	Transcription And Value In Arabic Letters		Notes
ⵖ	ɣ	غ	Prononcunced gutturally. Frequently transcribed as gh in literature.
ⵙ	s	س	
ⵜ	t	ت	
ⵟ	ṭ	ط	Emphatic
ⵣ	z	ز	
ⵥ	ẓ		Emphatic

For certain geographical names the mode of spelling is in accordance with that of the maps edited by Institut Géographique National. The pronunciation of vowels is not indicated. At the end of words the Tuareg sometimes indicate vowels with a dot, which may stand for any vowel.

Pastoral Ecology in Ahaggar and Air.

The Tuareg of the true desert country have their camps in or close to mountain massifs of which the more important are Ahaggar and Tassili-n-Ajjer. Geographically these two regions have many traits in common. In Ahaggar, which rises to 3000 metres above sea level, the annual precipitation according to official statistics is between 20 mm and 40 mm. These figures are extremely low, but more characteristic of the desert country is the irregularity of the rainfalls. In some years there may fall no rain at all, while in others precipitation is much bigger than appears from the figures above. Several dry years may follow each other alternating with periods of abundant rainfall. According to investigations by Dubiéf four years out of ten are so dry that rainfall is of no importance for the regeneration of pastures (Dubiéf 1947, p. 7–23). Owing to the scarcity and the fluctuations of precipitation in Ahaggar a persistent vegetation cannot generally exist outside river valleys and depressions which are flooded during heavy rain. In the valleys perennial plants comprise not only grasses and herbs but also tall trees among which tamarisk and acacia are prominent. In dry years the perennial plants have little value as fodder for the domestic animals of the Tuareg. A great many goats may then die from hunger, and to avoid such a disaster some Tuareg take their flocks to the plains of Tamesna or to the Adrar-n-Iforas Mountains where rain is normally more plentiful and grazing better than in Ahaggar. However, even in dry years the majority of Ahaggar Tuareg will remain in their native country with their goat-flocks. For although they run the risk of losing a great many goats during a drought in Ahaggar

5: Nicolaisen E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1959
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Air

Later than the Kel Ferouan other clans or groups arrived in Air from the north. Prominent were the Kel Fadei who are said to be related to the Taitoḳ clan of Ahaggar (Duveyrier 1864, p. 322. – Urvoy 1936, p. 150. – Nicolas 1950b, p. 472). Barth however is of the opinion that they came from different regions but in particular from Tassili-n-Ajjer (Barth 1857, I, p. 384). The Kel Fadei Tuareg first lived in Northern Air and their name is derived from the mountains of Fadei in these regions. At the end of the 18th century they migrated towards the south-west to the region of In Gall where they still have grazing grounds.

Still later immigrants are the Kel Tamat who came possibly three or four centuries ago. Urvoy mentions Ahaggar as their homeland (Urvoy 1936, p. 150), while Nicolas says they are related to the Oraren clan of Tassili-n-Ajjer (Nicolas 1950b, p. 471). Even later came the Ikaskazan Tuareg who in Air attached themselves to the Kel Tamat. According to Urvoy they came from Ahaggar (Urvoy 1936, p. 151), according to Nicolas they descend partly from the Taitoḳ of Ahaggar, partly from the Imenṛasaten and the Oraṛen of Tassili-n-Ajjer (Nicolas 1950b, p. 472). Tuareg of the Ikaskazan told me that they are related to the Oraṛen.

It is well known that all over Northern Africa numerous Arabs and Berbers claim relationship with the Prophet and his family. Most of these traditions seem to be mere fake. We may, to mention an extreme example, take the negroid blacksmiths of Ahaggar who firmly hold that their ancestor lived in Mekka as the blacksmith of the Prophet. All traditions relating clans to Islam have been omitted in this brief account of Tuareg history in Air. This does not mean, of course, that we can rely on the above traditions which are very often contradictory. An obvious case is that of the Kel Ferouan. In literature there are traditions of Tripolitania or Tassili-n-Ajjer as their homeland, while I have been constantly told that they came from Ahaggar as close kinsmen of the Kel Ṛela. I think this latter tradition gathered by myself does not contain much historical truth but perhaps reflects political relations of the past. The Kel Ferouan apparently were on quite good terms with the Kel Ṛela of Ahaggar whom they admired because of their power. The Kel Ṛela had many quarrels with the Taitoḳ and also with the Kel Fadei, and the latter Tuareg again were enemies of the Kel Ferouan. As the Kel Fadei claimed themselves related to the Taitoḳ it may have been quite natural for the Kel Ferouan (the most important clan in Air) to claim relationship to the Kel Ṛela (the most important clan of Ahaggar).

We can never rely on oral traditions of origin, but they may contain some historical truth. All traditions mentioned point to a northern origin of the Air Tuareg and in particular to Tassili-n-Ajjer, the Fezzan, and adjacent regions. In support of these traditions we can refer to the fact that the most important northern trade road from Air leads to the oasis of Ghat, Tripolitania, and the Fezzan.

777 /118 cont./ inexplicable repugnance shown by the Tuareg for certain foods or for certain behavior is nothing other than a manifestation of taboos designed to protect them against the spiritual forces loosed by the persons or things in their surroundings.

Perhaps it would be fruitful to study the customs of the Tuareg world in the light of the philosophy of the forces whose principles are set forth by the Reverend Father Tempels in his Philosophie bantoue /Bantu Philosophy/.

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Life of the Individual

● 128 In closing this survey of the Ahaggar it is well to look briefly at the activities engaged in by the Targui from the day of his birth to that of his death. In following the natural course of a life, we may understand better than from more detailed studies of a particular phase the essence of the life of an individual within a tribe, insofar as it is possible to separate what is individual from what is tribal.

844 The young Targui makes his entry into the world in the tent, upon a rug of clean sand from the nearest wadi, sand which is, as we know, practically sterile, the heat destroying all microbes. Before giving birth, the young mother has followed the advice of her aunt or mother; she has walked up and down small hills ever since the first pains in order to "allow the infant to get well placed." As the pains increase, the young woman, now back in the tent, kneels on the sand, buttocks resting on the heels, and knees spread very wide apart; with raised arms she grasps two ropes which hang from the tent stakes. Two women hold her by the waist, encourage her,

7:Nicolaisen E-5 (1951-1962) 1963 MS25 Tuareg MS25

younger animals which yield more milk. Again, the meat of very old goats is of inferior quality. Much goat-meat derives from he-goats of which a very limited number is needed for mating. Some Tuareg claim that one he-goat is able to cover about a hundred goats, but as a rule I doubt whether it would be called upon to do so. In any event, too many he-goats are brought forth, and even very young male kids are frequently killed and eaten as there will be more milk for the nomads when such animals do not have to be suckled. It is considered ideal that male kids which are not needed for reproduction, and which are not killed at very early age, should be castrated at the time when weaning takes place, but even old he-goats may be castrated to make them fat for slaughtering.

Though meat is not a stable dish of the Tuareg they have to kill a certain number of goats every year to obtain skin for the manufacture of various domestic utensils. The roaming life in the desert necessitates a great many containers for water, butter, milk, grain, dates, and the like, and bags made from goat-skin are appropriate for this purpose. Indeed, goat-skin is so important to Tuareg craft that in speaking of the manufacture of most domestic articles one can hardly avoid mentioning the word "goat". Thus, my fairly large collection of ethnographic specimens from the Ahaggar Tuareg contains about fifty different objects made entirely or mainly of goat-skin, which is also used for the manufacture of tents among the Northern Tuareg. Even nowadays, a few articles of dress are made from goat-skin, and goat-skin was in general use for this purpose in the past (cf. p. 287 ff.).

Goat-hair is extremely useful to the Northern Tuareg. The hair is cut once a year in the hot season when the animals do not suffer from cold (cf. Fig. 98). It is spun into strong cords used for tethering animals, for tying up caravan loads, for reins, and the like. In certain tribes of Ahaggar it is also used for a very primitive kind of weaving (cf. p. 265 ff., Figs. 209a–b).

To understand the economic role of goat-breeding one must briefly touch on the question of size of flocks. Statistics concerning the ownership of livestock must always be regarded with much suspicion, as it is extremely difficult to obtain data. It is not only most impolite to ask Tuareg about the size of

Fig. 20. A kid with the stick (*akara, asegfres*) pierced through the mouth as described in the text. Tasilé-n-Ajjer, the *Kel Terwit* tribe.

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their flocks, but it is, on the whole, improper to show any interest in their animals. Some nomads will even claim that although they know all their goats by sight, they do not know, or never mention, the total number of their animals, as this is believed to bring bad luck. This belief is probably explained by the idea of the evil eye. To this may be added that it is difficult to judge the ownership of goats by merely watching the flock of a household which may also have animals grazing on other pastures.

According to official statistics for 1948, the average number of goats per household among the *Kel Ahaggar* is fifteen (Capot-Rey 1953a, p. 265). This figure is probably derived from the tax lists, and it seems to be much too low – even when households of slaves and sedentary agriculturists are included. Lhote has stated that the number of goats per person, under ideal conditions, is 35–40. If they increase above this, the surplus is slaughtered or sold to the sedentary peoples of the oases (Lhote 1951a, p. 9). This latter figure for ownership of goats under ideal conditions is probably true for the more wealthy Tuareg of Ahaggar. Thus among the vassal Tuareg of the *Dag Rali* tribe many household are said to possess 100–200 goats, but this tribe is considered extremely rich in goats, and households of other tribes will not generally own so many animals. From rough calculations made in a great many camps of vassal Tuareg, and Tuareg of the *Isekkemaren* class, I estimate that households on an average possess 60–70 goats when pastures are not too badly developed, for it must be emphasized that the size of flocks changes with climatic conditions. For the sedentary agriculturists of Ahaggar I estimate, on the basis of calculations made at Amsel, Abalessa, and Tafhawhawt, that a household possesses on average 15–20 goats.

In good years the amount of milk products supplied by a flock of 60 goats is rather considerable. This is clear when we consider the fact that a goat, during the period of three to four months in autumn and early winter when pasture of annual plants is green, will yield up to two litres of milk every day. When annual pasture gets dry the milk yield decreases but milk is still comparatively plentiful and important for food all the winter. In summer, however, there is little milk for reasons already referred to, and in dry years goats, even in the cold season, yield little or no milk. The flocks decrease during such periods of drought and some nomads may even lose most of their animals. During my stay among the Tuareg of Ahnet and Ahaggar from November 1954 to April 1955, goats suffered much from lack of fodder. In many camps one or two goats died of hunger every day.

The Ahaggar Tuareg cannot subsist entirely on goat-breeding because severe droughts occur frequently in their country. During drought-periods the goats are so to speak valueless as subsistence for the nomads. But it is remarkable that goats emaciated in consequence of severe drought quickly grow fat and start to yield milk once rain has fallen abundantly enough for the regeneration of pastures. In connection with this we shall point to another characteristic of goat-breeding: The animals have a very short gestation period, and the kids are fully grown for mating in one year. And as one goat may have four kids annually with free mating, a household, which has lost most animals during a drought, will be able very quickly to re-establish a flock large enough for its needs.

Goats are also highly important for the subsistence of the pastoral Tuareg of Ayr. I do not know of any statistic material about the size of flocks in this area, but for Tuareg of Kidal (Adraɾ-n-Foras) flocks are officially estimated at 74 goats and sheep per household (Capot-Rey 1953a, p. 269), and this region is environmentally related to Southern Ayr. The *Kel Ferwan* Tuareg say that a household

[Text continues on p. 45]

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Fig. 157. Skin bag (*imesekey*) for souring milk before churning. Ahaggar, the *Dag Rali* tribe. Dimension: smallest height 0.20 m. (N.M. G. 5207).

234 Milk of goats, sheep, and cows is frequently mixed to make cheese of the *takammart* type, but milk of these domestic animals is also used individually for cheese-making. The very best milk is said to be sheep-milk which gives almost white cheese, while cow's milk yield a more yellow-coloured one. –

128 The use of milk, butter, and cheese in connection with various vegetable dishes will be described later in this chapter, and we shall now briefly outline the use of meat and its preparation.

Dress

In this chapter on Tuareg dress I do neither describe all types of Tuareg garments nor dress ornamentation, but content myself with a brief description of the prominent articles of dress and of certain peculiar garments which are interesting and important for our understanding of the cultural position of the Tuareg.

In Northern Tuareg country pastoral women sometimes wear a large hat plaited from date palm leaves and known as *téllé*, which literally means "shade" (cf. Fig. 231). However, hats of this kind are never manufactured by pastoral Tuareg who obtain them from sedentary agriculturists. Hats of the same type are very common further north in Africa where they are worn not only by women but also by men, and I believe that hats of this sort were introduced to the Tuareg by the Arabs and the Arabic speaking *Ḥarratin*, who came to Ahaggar about a hundred years ago. In Ayr I have seen plaited hats worn by one or two black-skinned men of the *Kel Ewey* group. These hats are also used among the Hausa. True pastoral Tuareg like those of the *Kel Ferwan* group do not wear hats.

It seems as if the hat is a foreign element in Tuareg culture, and that as traditional head garments the Tuareg have nothing beyond the veil and the headcloth described in some detail in the general chapter about the Tuareg (cf. p. 14 f.). We have seen that both the veil and the headcloth are sometimes referred to as *alechchu*, "a piece of Sudanese indigo cotton sewn together from narrow strips or bands", for the traditional veil and headcloth are made from this type of cotton which is highly esteemed for many other garments. It seems to be the oldest type of cotton used for dress among the Tuareg, while white cotton of an ordinary type has been introduced more recently among them. The Ayr Tuareg use the word *maser* for white cotton woven in one piece, and they say that this word refers to *Miṣr* (Egypt) wherefrom cotton of this particular type was first introduced. It came much later than indigo cotton of Sudanese type, which has been known in Ayr from very ancient times.

Indigo coloured cotton introduced from the Sudan is very expensive and is nowadays used mainly for festive occasions, while daily dress, including the veil, is made of European cotton, which is indigo or white in colour. There can be no doubt that the comparatively cheap European cotton has displaced the use of skin or leather for daily dress. For we know that skin shirts were extremely common in Ahaggar at the beginning of the present century (cf. Foucauld 1951-52, I, p. 112), and Duveyrier says that "le pardessus en peau" is held in esteem (Duveyrier 1864, p. 406). Before Duveyrier we have Lyon's statement that Tuareg of the Fezzan area use skin (leather) for dress:— "A leather kaftan is also much worn, of their own manufacture, as are leather shirts of the skins of antelopes, very neatly sewed, and well prepared". In addition Lyon depicts a Tuareg wearing a leather shirt with ample sleeves (Lyon 1821, p. 110).